Ezekiel 24

The Rusted Pot:
The Siege Begins and the Desire of His Eyes

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The day the siege began, God told Ezekiel to mark the calendar. Jerusalem was a rusted pot that no amount of scrubbing had cleaned, so the fire would burn hot until the rust was gone. Then God took Ezekiel's wife — the desire of his eyes — and told him not to mourn, so the exiles would understand: the temple they loved and trusted was about to be taken just as suddenly. It's the hardest assignment any prophet ever carried, and Ezekiel obeyed the next morning.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 24 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning
Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

1 Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

3 And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it:

4 Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones.

5 Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein.

6 Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it.

7 For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust;

8 That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered.

9 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great.

10 Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned.

11 Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed.

12 She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire.

13 In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.

14 I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

15 Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.

18 So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

19 And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so?

20 Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

21 Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword.

22 And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.

23 And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another.

24 Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

25 Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters,

26 That he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears?

27 In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v1** in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month
- **v2** write thee the name of the day
- **v2** the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day
- **v3** the rebellious house
- **v3** Set on a pot
- **v6** Woe to the bloody city
- **v6** scum *(every occurrence)*
- **v7** she set it upon the top of a rock
- **v12** She hath wearied herself with lies
- **v13** because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged
- **v14** I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it
- **v14** according to thy ways, and according to thy doings
- **v16** the desire of thine eyes
- **v16** neither shalt thou mourn nor weep
- **v18** at even my wife died
- **v18** I did in the morning as I was commanded
- **v19** Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us
- **v21** I will profane my sanctuary
- **v21** the desire of your eyes
- **v24** Ezekiel is unto you a sign
- **v24** ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD
- **v27** shall thy mouth be opened
- **v27** they shall know that I am the LORD

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 24:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

Setting

This is one of the most exact dates in Ezekiel: "in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month" (v1) — counted from King Jehoiachin's exile, so about January 588 B.C. Far away in Babylon, Ezekiel is told to write it down, because "The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day" (v2). The same day is recorded in 2 Kings 25:1, Jeremiah 39:1 and 52:4. The siege will last until the city falls in 586 B.C. This chapter closes the first half of Ezekiel — the judgment on Jerusalem — before the oracles against the nations (chs. 25–32).

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the day the siege began:** "write the name of the day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day" (v2).
- vv3–5 — **the cooking pot:** "Speak a parable to the rebellious house" (v3): "Put on the pot, put it on and also pour water in it" (v3). Fill it with the choice pieces and bones and boil it hard (vv4–5).
- vv6–8 — **the rusted pot:** "Woe to the bloody city, to the pot in which there is rust and whose rust has not gone out of it!" (v6). Empty it piece after piece, "without making a choice" (v6). "For her blood is in her midst; she placed it on the bare rock" (v7) — uncovered — so God has set her blood on the bare rock too, for vengeance (v8).
- vv9–14 — **burn the pot empty:** "I also will make the pile great" (v9). Heap on the wood, boil away the meat, burn the bones (v10), then set the empty pot on the coals so that "its rust consumed" (v11). "She has wearied Me with toil, yet her great rust has not gone from her" (v12). "Because I would have cleansed you, yet you are not clean," she will not be cleansed "until I have spent My wrath on you" (v13). "I, the LORD, have spoken; it is coming and I will act. I will not relent, and I will not pity and I will not be sorry" (v14).
- vv15–18 — **the death of Ezekiel's wife:** "I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes with a blow; but you shall not mourn and you shall not weep" (v16). "Groan silently; make no mourning for the dead" (v17). "So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. And in the morning I did as I was commanded" (v18).
- vv19–24 — **the sign explained:** "Will you not tell us what these things that you are doing mean for us?" (v19). God answers: "I am about to profane My sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes and the delight of your soul" (v21), and their children will fall by the sword. They will not mourn either; "you will rot away in your iniquities and you will groan to one another" (v23). "Thus Ezekiel will be a sign to you" (v24).
- vv25–27 — **the survivor and the opened mouth:** on the day the city falls, a survivor will come with the news (vv25–26). "On that day your mouth will be opened to him who escaped, and you will

speak and be mute no longer" (v27).

Repeated words

day (vv2, 25, 26, 27); woe to the bloody city (vv6, 9); pot (vv3, 5, 6); rust (vv6, 11, 12); cleansed / clean (v13); desire of your / their eyes (vv16, 21, 25); mourn / mourning (vv16, 17, 23); sign (vv24, 27); know that I am the Lord (vv24, 27).

Contrasts

a pot of choice meat (vv4–5) ⟷ a pot burned empty to get the rust off (v11). Blood left on the bare rock (v7) ⟷ blood that should have been covered with dust (Lev 17:13). "I would have cleansed you" ⟷ "you are not clean" (v13). Ezekiel's wife, the desire of his eyes (v16) ⟷ the temple, the desire of theirs (v21). A prophet forbidden to mourn (vv16–17) ⟷ a people too stunned to mourn (vv22–23). A mute prophet ⟷ a mouth opened (v27).

Chapter theme (my words)

The day the siege began, God told Ezekiel to mark the calendar. Jerusalem was a rusted pot that no amount of scrubbing had cleaned, so the fire would burn hot until the rust was gone. Then God took Ezekiel's wife — the desire of his eyes — and told him not to mourn, so the exiles would understand: the temple they loved and trusted was about to be taken just as suddenly. It's the hardest assignment any prophet ever carried, and Ezekiel obeyed the next morning.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 24:14 (KJV)

14 ▲ I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; ⚠ according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

The date that changed everything (vv1–2)

Guzik calls this date "nation-changing and life-changing" and compares it to how people remember 9/11. Ezekiel in Babylon is told the very day the siege began hundreds of miles away — proof, once the news came, that God had spoken through him. The exiles later kept a fast in the tenth month to remember it (Zech 8:19). Jerusalem's people had been saying they were the meat in the pot — safe and choice (11:3). God takes their own picture and turns it.

The pot and its rust (vv3–8)

Wright, in Guzik: "Jerusalem is the cooking pot, and its people are the meat that is to be cooked." Block, in Guzik, suggests the bones used as fuel may be human. The KJV's "scum" is better "rust" — Feinberg, in Guzik: "Some translate the word as 'scum,' but 'rust' is correct." The rust is the city's corruption — bloodshed and oppression soaked into the metal. Taking the pieces out "without making a choice" (v6) means no one is singled out to be spared; everything comes out. And the blood is "on

the bare rock" (v7): the Law said to cover spilled blood with dust (Lev 17:13), but Jerusalem shed innocent blood openly, without shame. So God leaves it uncovered as a witness against her (compare Gen 4:10).

Burned empty (vv9–14)

The cooking fire becomes a funeral pyre. When the meat is gone, the empty pot itself is set on the coals until the rust melts away. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "no regeneration, only total destruction" — for that generation. Verse 13 is the heartbreak: "I would have cleansed you, yet you are not clean." Block, in Guzik, ties this to the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah, which never reached the heart (2 Kgs 23:25–27). So God says plainly in v14: He will not relent, pity or be sorry. God will judge them "according to your deeds" (v14) — and Guzik notes that their ways and deeds brought the judgment, just as the Sinai covenant warned (Deut 28:15).

"The desire of your eyes" (vv15–18)

This is the only time we learn Ezekiel was married. Guzik says the phrase "touchingly" shows how dear she was; Poole, in Guzik, says it "certainly refers to the amiableness of her disposition." God tells him beforehand that she will die "with a blow" — suddenly. He may not do the public rites of mourning: loud wailing, uncovered head, bare feet, covered lip, the meal brought by neighbors (v17; compare Jer 16:5–7). Feinberg, in Guzik: "He was not forbidden to sorrow, for even our Lord wept at the grave of Lazarus" — only the outward display was forbidden. He was to "groan silently." Then the most painful verse in the book: she died in the evening, and the next morning he did as he was commanded. Trapp, in Guzik: "conjugal love must give place to our love to him." Guzik adds that this was a unique calling, not a pattern for how believers should grieve.

The sign explained (vv19–24)

By now the exiles expect meaning in Ezekiel's actions (v19). God answers: just as the prophet's wife was taken suddenly, so the temple — "the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes" — would be profaned and destroyed, and the children left in Jerusalem would die. Guzik: "As Ezekiel's wife suddenly died, so the sanctuary would suddenly and soon perish." The people had an "irrational and dangerous confidence in the mere existence of the temple" (Jer 7:4). When the news came, the shock would be too deep for ordinary mourning — Smith, in Guzik: "a grief which is beyond tears." They would waste away in their sins and groan to one another.

The opened mouth (vv25–27)

Since his call, Ezekiel had been unable to speak except when God gave him a message (3:26–27). That would end when a survivor arrived with the news — which happened some months after the city fell (33:21–22). After that, Guzik says, Ezekiel's ministry turned toward hope. Smith, in Guzik: "This prophet who previously had been so negative would become at that time the great encourager." God and His prophet would both be vindicated: "they will know that I am the LORD" (v27).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **laid siege — *samak* (H5564):** to lean upon, lay hold of — here, to press against a city.
- **parable — *mashal* (H4912):** a proverb, parable, comparison.
- **rebellious — *meri* (H4805):** rebellion, bitterness.

- **pot — *sir* (H5518):** a cooking pot, cauldron.
- **rust — *chelʾah* (H2457):** rust, corrosion (KJV "scum").
- **filthiness — *tumʾah* (H2932):** uncleanness, moral impurity.
- **cleansed — *taher* (H2891):** to be clean, pure; to purify.
- **relent — *paraʿ* (H6544):** to let go, let loose.
- **be sorry — *nacham* (H5162):** to be sorry, relent, change one's mind.
- **desire — *machmad* (H4261):** a delight, a precious thing.
- **blow — *maggephah* (H4046):** a stroke, plague, sudden blow.
- **mourn — *saphad* (H5594):** to wail, lament, beat the breast.
- **groan — *ʾanaq* (H602):** to sigh, groan.
- **pride — *gaʾon* (H1347):** excellency, majesty; also arrogance.
- **sign — *mopheth* (H4159):** a sign, wonder, object lesson.
- **mute — *ʾalam* (H481):** to be bound, dumb, silent.

Cross-references

Gen 4:10; Lev 17:13; Deut 28:15; 2 Kgs 23:25–27; 2 Kgs 25:1–10; Jer 7:4–14; Jer 16:5–7; Jer 39:1; Jer 52:4; Ezek 3:26–27; Ezek 11:3–11; Ezek 33:21–22; Zech 8:19; Matt 10:37; Luke 14:26; John 11:35; 1 Thess 4:13; Heb 12:5–11.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 24:16 (KJV)

16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee ⇄ the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet ▮▮ neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

Command to obey — "I did as I was commanded."

Ezekiel buried his wife in the evening and obeyed God in the morning (v18). I can't imagine that cost. Most of what God asks of me is far smaller, and I still drag my feet. I want a heart that says "yes, Lord" the next morning — especially on the hard mornings.

Sin to confess — rust that won't come off

"I would have cleansed you, yet you are not clean" (v13). God has worked on me over and over — sermons, friends, hard seasons — and some of the rust is still there because I've let it stay. I confess the sins I keep scrubbing at the surface instead of bringing to the cross.

Warning to heed — trusting the building

Judah trusted the temple — "the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes" (v21) — more than the God of the temple. I can do that with my church, my ministry, my tools and books. For the men I

disciple, it can be the program, the meeting or the sponsor. Good things become idols when they take God's place, and God can take them away to get our eyes back on Him.

Promise to trust — the mouth will be opened

Ezekiel's long silence ended, and his message turned to hope (v27; ch. 33–37). The worst news is not the last word with God. For the man sitting in a cell who thinks his story is over, the same God who let Jerusalem fall later gave Ezekiel the valley of dry bones (37:1–14). After judgment comes restoration for those who turn to Him.

Example to follow — grief that still obeys

Ezekiel wasn't forbidden to sorrow, only to make a public show — he groaned silently (v17). Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:35). I want to grieve honestly as a believer, "not grieve as do the rest who have no hope" (1 Thess 4:13), and keep doing the next right thing. Men in recovery and men coming home from prison carry a lot of losses; they need to see a man who can grieve and still obey.

Worship

The LORD knows the very day. He sees what happens in Jerusalem from Babylon. His word comes to pass exactly. He is holy enough to burn away the rust, and faithful enough to open the mouth of His prophet again with hope.

Prayer

Lord GOD, You know the day and the hour of everything in my life. Burn away the rust in me that I've refused to let You clean. Keep me from trusting anything — even good things — more than You. When loss comes, help me grieve honestly and still do as You command in the morning. And use my life as a sign that points people to You. Amen.